The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accurate and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor executive in the labor press, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1738 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1945 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 35, NO. 39

Thru Payroll Savings

LABOR, USA

Washington, D. C.—The twelfth edition of the American Federationist of the Air, broadcast on the "Labor, USA" program over the American Broadcasting Company network, presented the following outstanding feature articles to supplement the news:

Poverty or Plenty

By REP. A. J. BIEMILLER of Wisconsin

The Senate adopted an unemployment compensation bill which falls far short of the standard urgently recommended by President Truman.

The bill as passed has three good features. It extends the duration of unemployment benefits throughout the nation to 26 weeks. The limit now in some states is only 15 weeks. Further, the new measure grants jobless benefits to almost 3,000,000 government employes and 400,000 maritime workers, hitherto excluded. Finally, the bill allows up to $200 to send stranded war workers back home to new jobs.

These are desirable improvements, but they do not go far enough to meet human needs during reconversion. The Senate killed the President's key recommendation, which called for supplementing the present, inadequate state unemployment benefits with federal funds to reach a nation-wide maximum payment of $25 a week.

Those who opposed the President's recommendation, have served notice that they intend to fight for an economy of poverty and scarcity in America. That challenge is accepted by the liberal forces in Congress who are determined to press for legislation which will encourage full production, full employment and an economy of plenty in our land.

The provision for a $25 maximum payment was buried under an avalanche of misinformation and misunderstanding. The argument was made that paying the unemployed $25 a week would encourage idleness. Yet the law specifically provides that applicants must declare their willingness to accept suitable employment before they can become eligible to receive compensation. The impression was fostered that every unemployed worker would get $25 a week. But unemployment insurance is based on previous earnings and the $25 maximum would go only to those who earned more than $50 a week in their former jobs.

The danger is that inadequate unemployment insurance will dry up purchasing power, freighten workers and cause production to shrink because of lack of customers. The only ones who object to a decent standard of unemployment insurance are a handful of selfish employers who would like to starve labor into accepting sub-paid jobs.

There is still time and opportunity to redeem the error when the bill comes to the House of Representatives. The people of this nation must make itself felt. At present the House is in no mood to improve the Senate bill. But its mood can be changed and you can do it. Write to your Congressman today and tell him how you feel about this legislation. If enough people write soon enough we can get quick action on a good law.

Labor Department Reorganization

By ROBERT J. WATT

Member of the National War Labor Board

The reorganization of the Department of Labor, announced by President Truman, is half a step in the right direction and no more.

The President's action was blown up in the newspapers as making the Labor Department stronger than ever before in its history. It did nothing of the kind.

I do not wish to belittle the President's well-intentioned move, but in the long run it is better to know what we are about than to delude ourselves.

Even a casual glance at the agencies which have now been transferred to the Labor Department will disclose the essential weakness of the whole maneuver.

First, the War Manpower Commission. This agency, powerful and important during wartime, is now practically a dead set of initials. It was designed to guide workers where they were most needed in a time of labor shortages. Now, with surplus labor conditions and unemployment developing its mission in life is just about over.

Then, take the War Labor Board. This agency also is living on borrowed time. For the most part it is an agency of appeals. Any new cases that arise, I mean himself has indicated that he believes the board should wind up its remaining docket as promptly as possible and step out.

By his executive order, the President also moved the United States Employment Service back to the Labor Department. That would be a significant and desirable change. The only trouble is that the United States Senate voted two days later to place the USES under state control. If the House of Representatives concurs in this action, the most important element in the reorganization plan would be nullified.

The American Federation of Labor insists emphatically that the Labor Department should be reorganized and strengthened. We do not believe that the President has as yet gone far enough. Practically all federal agencies dealing with labor-industrial problems should be centralized within the Labor Department. We still hope that will be done.

Meanwhile, we look forward to the labor-management conference to be held November 5th at the President's call to take the first constructive steps toward new government machinery which would give the Labor Department really effective power to establish and maintain industrial peace.

Relief to Europe

By FOSTER J. PRATT

President of the I. F. T. E. A. & D. U.

Heeding the call of the American Federation of Labor and other progressive groups, President Truman has appealed to the nation to come to the relief of our less fortunate neighbors across the Atlantic.

The shadows of death are deepening over Europe, and 60 days the continent will be winter-bound. Millions of families, millions of children, face a crisis.

Hunger is already stalking through Europe. The people who fought side by side with us in the war, the people whom we helped to liberate, are desperate.

In these countries, ruined by war and Fascist pillage, the survival of thousands of men, women and children depends on our decision. The American people must realize that help from us is their only hope. Also that on us, the future of democracy in the world and the future of America itself in the years to come.

President Truman said "We must help to the limits of our strength—and we will." That was a promise. It is up to us to keep it. It is up to us to discharge our moral obligation toward those who have no one else to look to for assistance.

This winter is the real test. Crops cannot be grown in the winter. In most of the European countries, transportation facilities have been wrecked or have broken down. Fuel is practically unobtainable and medicine is scarce.

What we must do is to provide enough food and supplies to prevent starvation and hold and epidemics from decimating the people of Europe again.

The American Federation of Labor and the Labor League for Human Rights, which is labor's own relief agency, join the call to all Americans to help meet this immediate postwar crisis.

Labor insists that the government promptly determine how we can put the surpluses we have to the greatest use in helping the people of Europe now so they can take care of themselves sooner.

Labor asks that the essential supplies released by army cutbacks be made available at once for relief.

Labor urges that firm steps be taken to assure a fair distribution of food to have and at the same time to make available the largest possible shipments of food to reduce starvation abroad.

SAY, LISTEN!

For the rest of this year, the AFL presents each Saturday evening at 6:45 P.M., EWT, over the nation-wide network of the American Broadcasting Company a radio news-magazine, featuring the latest news at home and abroad and special reports by expert commentators on important labor problems. This program is listed in the radio columns of your newspaper as "Labor-U.S.A." Our own subtitle for the program is "The American Federationist of the Air." Don't miss these bright, newsy broadcasts! Listen every Saturday night!

Labor Department Reorganization Fails To Solve Many Major Problems

Washington, D. C.—President Truman's initial reorganization of the Labor Department failed to ease tension in the nation's troubled labor-industrial situation.

The President transferred to the Labor Department the National War Labor Board, the War Manpower Commission and the U. S. Employment Service. Secretary of Labor Schwellenbach said these changes would strengthen his authority in dealing with disputes.

Thus far, the agency shifts have resulted in no visible improvement while a certain amount of confusion did develop.

Immediately after the War Labor Board was moved, its chairman, George W. Taylor, resigned. For a few days it appeared that there would be a wholesale wave of additional resignations but the Board finally called an emergency conference and prevailed upon seven of the board before its work is completed.

As AFL member Robert J. Watt said on the AFL Labor-USA radio program, the War Labor Board is preparing to go out of existence, the War Manpower Commission already has wound up its work and the State has voted to return the U. S. Employment Service to state control. He therefore called the reorganization only "half a step in the right direction—and no more."

WLB members were prevailed upon to remain on the job after Schwellenbach assured them he would refrain from interfering with the board's decisions or policies.

The Secretary of Labor revealed that he felt continuing operation of the WLB is vital until the labor-management conferences, to be open on President Truman's call on Nov. 5, fashions some substitute procedure for settlement of industrial disputes.

Although few disputes have been certified to the board since the Japanese surrender, between 2,000 and 3,000 unresolved disputes remain on the docket. The board also has a docket of thousands of alleged violations of stabilization regulations. In addition, applications are coming in for permission to reduce wage rates.

Gen. Stilwell Lauds Labor

By WILLIAM T. HOLLOMAN

Editor of Aero Mechanic, Seattle

Okinawa, Aug. 31.—With victorious U. S. troops establishing themselves on Japanese home islands, the part that American labor had in bringing final victory to the Pacific battlefronts was praised more and more—from battle-weary GIs to the highest ranking army and navy officials.

Joseph W. (Vinegar Joe) Stilwell, one of America's most outspoken and trenchant generals, readily admitted that labor's production record during the war has been "phenomenal and almost unbelievable." Speaking to a group of editors of American labor papers, General Stilwell pointed to the huge masses of guns, tanks and other weapons of war that cover the entirety of battle-marked Okinawa.

"Just look at the stuff that is out here," he said, "and you can tell why we won the war." In his words were the echo of statements made by other generals in the Pacific area, especially when speaking of the tremendous accomplishments of the Seabees, whose ranks are filled by former union members. The Seabees have won the respect of fighting men everywhere for their work of turning the Pacific jungle islands into first-class army and navy bases in record time, regardless of time, working under actual battle conditions.

General Stilwell touched upon the bitterness that is expressed by many GIs when they read of strikes in the United States. Most of the feeling, he pointed out, is traced to the fact that the men, living fighting soldiers, have full information concerning labor. "A man who is drafted and spends 28 months or more overseas, many of them in a fox hole, is going to be bitter about any kind of disturbances at home, especially when they are not able to receive accurate information about the true state of affairs. Actually, the number of strikes during 1945 will have been relatively small, the ones that have occurred have been terribly pumped up and made to look more important than they actually are."

"There are bound to be, he said, a few slackers everywhere. "Why we've got some of them right here in the army, where a certain percentage of the men desert—but the huge majority of soldiers and workers alike have done a wonderful job for the war effort."

General Stilwell predicted close harmony between soldiers and workers in the postwar period. "When we were faced with a national crisis," he said, "every body pitched in and played ball together. That spirit must not be forgotten. There certainly is no reason why we cannot carry this ability over into peace."

New McMahon Labor Relations Bill Emphasizes Voluntary Settlements

Washington, D. C.—Senator McMahon, Connecticut Democrat, has put new labor relations bill in Congress along with 2 colleagues.

The measure proposes to strengthen the mediation and arbitration machinery of the government without introducing any compulsory features into collective bargaining procedures.

In contrast with the sponsors of the Ball-Burton-Hatch bill, Senator McMahon accepted at least one AFL and President William Green and other labor and industrial leaders before drafting their legislation.

However, the AFL has made no commitment to support the bill.

One feature of the McMahon measure is a voluntary labor-management conference to provide machinery for the purpose of investigating and making public to determine and make public the facts in any labor dispute which cannot be settled by collective bargaining methods of mediation and arbitration. These boards, the Senator said, would help clear the air by "providing a public forum so that the factual argument of each side would be available for the information of the public."

First emphasis in the McMahon bill is placed on free collective bargaining which is the method when parties are not settled by such negotiation, the measure sets up a Division of Mediation and Conciliation in the Labor Department. Should these steps also fail, the McMahon bill provides a way for the voluntary submission of the questions at issue to arbitration by a board to be named by the President. Once the board's services are engaged by both sides, its decision is to be final and have the force of a.

In order to enter arbitration under the McMahon bill, the parties must stipulate in advance that they will accept the award made by a majority of the arbitration board.

ILGWU OFFERS $250,000 FOR SOVIET LABOR TEMPLE

New York City—An offer to construct a clubhouse for garment workers at the cost of $250,000 in Soviet Russia was made by David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers, Union, in a cabled message to Edward C. Carter, chairman of Russian War Relief.

The offer, made in "our appreciation of Russian heroism in the struggle against Fascism," reached Mr. Carter in London. He accepted the offer as a "genuine constructive contribution to rehabilitation of Russian war victims," subject to approval by proper Soviet authorities.

Mr. Dubinsky appointed Charles S. Zimmerman, an ILGWU vice president, to complete the negotiations resulting in the project with representatives of Russian War Relief in New York.

Pay Increase of 25 Percent Asked By AFL Government Employe Group

Washington, D. C.—The Government Employes Council of the A.F.L. in behalf of Federation of Labor called for higher salaries and wages for all men and women in the federal civilian service. While endorsing the principle of the Ramspeck Pay Bill, the council's position is in support of a full 25 percent increase, rather than the 20 percent which California Senator asked.

The council insisted that the 25 percent increase should constitute the over-all basis for all federal groups, and make some exception to the Classification Act. The postal service and all wage board groups must be included to avoid class legislation. The council pointed out that under the Economy and Credit Acts of 1932 and 1933, Congress enacted a horizontal measure reducing compensation for all classes, regardless of what law governed the regulation of pay scales.

The same device can be used in reverse now, the council maintained, to avoid needless and piecemeal legislation delays. The council renewed its proposal for full overtime rates to be paid regardless of salary. The wartime ceiling now is $2,980.

The council ignored this statement by Reconversion Director John W. Snyder:

"Wage shooting at a standard of living for our people as a whole that will be 50 percent higher than we or any other people ever had."

The council also renewed its proposal for the 30-hour week in government and in private employ.

AFL Hits Hostile Congress For Blocking Labor Bills

Green Appeals To Workers To Buy Victory Bonds

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green launched labor's participation in the new Victory Bond drive with a radio appeal to all the nation's workers to invest to the limit of their means. He said:

"All of us realize how important Victory Bonds are to the vital interests of the nation. America needs the money to pay for winning the peace and to bring our boys back home.

"But did you ever stop to think what these bonds mean to you personally? The Victory "E" Bond is designed for your protection. If you still have a job, Victory Bonds are the best and safest investment of your savings. If you lose your job temporarily, your Victory Bonds will carry you over until you find a new one. Every dollar you put into Victory Bonds now helps to prevent inflation of the cost of living.

"The American Federation of Labor urges all its members to buy Victory Bonds to the limit of their means."

CALIFORNIA UNIONS FIGHT CIO RAIDS

San Francisco.—The executive council of the California State Federation of Labor has pledged the federation's "entire resources" and the resources of its affiliated unions to move as one united force to crush the disruption and jurisdictional invasion attempts by CIO unions."

It accused the CIO not only of planning a "new" but of employing a "vicious campaign of slander, lies and abuses of AFL unions and their leaders."

"The AFL organizations in California represent more than 1,000,000 members and the CIO represents a total of not more than 100,000," the council asserted, adding:

"The AFL cannot tolerate or permit the disruption and jurisdictional invasions at a time when it must rally its forces to best employers in collective bargaining for the basic interests in the welfare of its dues-paying, working members."

The resolution did not refer to any specific CIO unions, but a spokesman for the council said the AFL was especially concerned with CIO inroads in the Hollywood film industry and with similar inroads by CIO organizers among the vegetable and fruit cannery workers.

LABOR PARLEY SET TO OPEN ON NOV. 5

Washington, D. C.—President Truman's labor-management conference will convene in Washington November 5 and will be comprised of "from 30 to 50" delegates, equally divided between labor and business associations, and presided over by a chairman, representing the public interest, Secretary of Labor Schwellenbach announced.

The conference, which appears to be the only tangible instrument so far devised by the Administration to meet the growing national crisis in labor, will have ample representation drawn from the AFL, CIO, United Mine Workers and Railroad Brotherhoods, and management conferees from United States Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers.

Schwellenbach and Secretary of Commerce Wallace will also sit in the conference, but without votes. The impartial chairman has not yet been determined. Although Schwellenbach declared that no decisions had yet been reached on the agenda of the conference and accordingly declined to indicate what issues it would consider, it was taken for granted that its prime concern was the establishment of procedures to deal with industrial disputes.

Displaced War Workers Offered Jobs At "Sweatshop" Wages, Survey Shows

Washington, D. C.—A telegraphic roundup of the employment situation in 134 principal cities made by the War Manpower Commission showed that a big majority of the jobs now offered to displaced war workers pay "sweatshop" wages.

In city after city, the overwhelming majority of the job vacancies carried rates of less than 75 cents an hour and in many communities, over half paid less than 60 cents, the report disclosed. That means $20 to $30 a week—below the standard considered necessary by the Department of Labor for "bare subsistence."

For example, New Haven, Conn., listed 2,700 openings—600 of them at 40 cents—was made by David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers, Union, in a cabled message to Edward C. Carter, chairman of Russian War Relief.

The offer, made in "our appreciation of Russian heroism in the struggle against Fascism," reached Mr. Carter in London. He accepted the offer as a "genuine constructive contribution to rehabilitation of Russian war victims," subject to approval by proper Soviet authorities.

Mr. Dubinsky appointed Charles S. Zimmerman, an ILGWU vice president, to complete the negotiations resulting in the project with representatives of Russian War Relief in New York.

The issues in dispute cover wages where a 65c minimum is asked by the AFL, seniority, hours, arbitration, hours, vacations, holidays, sickness, death and pension benefits and the union shop.

ILO TO SEVER LINK WITH LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Montreal—The permanent secretariat of the International Labor Organization announced that it favored the severing of all ties with the League of Nations, with which it has been linked since its formation after World War I.

The step would be in keeping with the ILO's announced desire to be affiliated with the United Nations Organization. Negotiations for this move are under way.

An ILO conference opening Oct. 16 in Paris will be asked to delete from the ILO's constitution all references to the League of Nations, it was announced in a report submitted by Edward J. Phelan, acting director of the International Labor Office, which has its headquarters here.

WESTERN UNION DISPUTE IS SUBMITTED TO WLB

Washington, D. C.—Disputed issues between the AFL coordinating board and the Western Union Telegraph Company were submitted to the National War Labor Board after the union agreed to accept the WLB's decision as final.

The issues in dispute cover wages where a 65c minimum is asked by the AFL, seniority, hours, arbitration, hours, vacations, holidays, sickness, death and pension benefits and the union shop.

IN-PLANT SNACKS CUT ABSENTEEISM RATE

Washington, D. C.—Accident and absenteeism rates have decreased as much as 30 percent in plants which make between-meal snacks available to workers, Dr. Robert S. Goodcare, chief of the Department of Agriculture Industrial Feeding Programs Division, disclosed.

He cited as examples the Thermoid Company, Trenton, N. J.; the Westinghouse plant at East Pittsburgh, Pa., and the Avondale Mills in Alabama. At the Thermoid company, workers decreased their accident rate 30 percent after the company began serving free pints of milk to 1,500 employes during 3 minute recesses. In addition, the workers cut down their absenteeism rates, increased their production.

"From practical experience large segments of labor and management have learned that between-meal snacks during regularly scheduled rest periods benefit the worker," said Dr. Goodhart. "Better morale, labor relations, and efficiency have been found to accompany this practice, along with decreases in accidents and absenteeism."

Support the Community War Fund.

Green Urges President To Show Congress Error of Its Ways

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green charged that Congress is striking against the best interests of the nation by killing unemployment compensation legislation.

He warned that the hostile attitude of Congress is contributing in large measure to unrest and uncertainty and is driving the American people to the left.

Mr. Green called upon President Truman to "show Congress the error of its ways" and lead the nation through the problems of reconversion into "the economy of plenty which America can and must achieve."

The AFL chief's blast followed the sudden and shocking action of the House Ways and Means Committee in killing the unemployment compensation bill passed by the Senate.

Mr. Green called the House move defiance of President Truman's urgent recommendations and "a slap in the face" to millions of war workers who are now losing their jobs.

His statement, which also congratulated AFL growing Congressional opposition at the Full Employment bill and other key measures on the AFL's list of "must" legislation, follows:

"By killing unemployment compensation legislation the House Ways and Means Committee has defied the President of the United States and slapped in the face millions of loyal American workers who are losing their war jobs.

"These workers responded to the urgent appeals of the government and patriotically remained at their machines in vital war industries when they could have taken safer and more permanent employment. They were assured by the government that they would not be made to suffer for their loyalty.

"Now that victory has been won, Congress has let them down and repudiated the solemn pledge of the government. First the Senate struck out from the Kilgore Unemployment Compensation bill the key provision recommended by President Truman for lifting maximum benefits to $25 a week. Now the House Ways and Means Committee has tabled the test of the bill.

"This hostile attitude by Congress is contributing in large measure to the unrest and uncertainty that is sweeping the country. Congress is in no position to complain about strikes, when it deliberately goes on strike itself against the best interests of the nation.

"Nothing is better calculated to destroy the free enterprise system and drive the American people to leftist extremes than the callous disregard shown by Congress toward human needs during reconversion.

"The American Federation of Labor calls upon President Truman to show Congress the error of its ways and to exert the kind of progressive leadership necessary to guide the nation through the problems of reconversion and into the economy of plenty which American can and must achieve."

SAY, LISTEN!

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